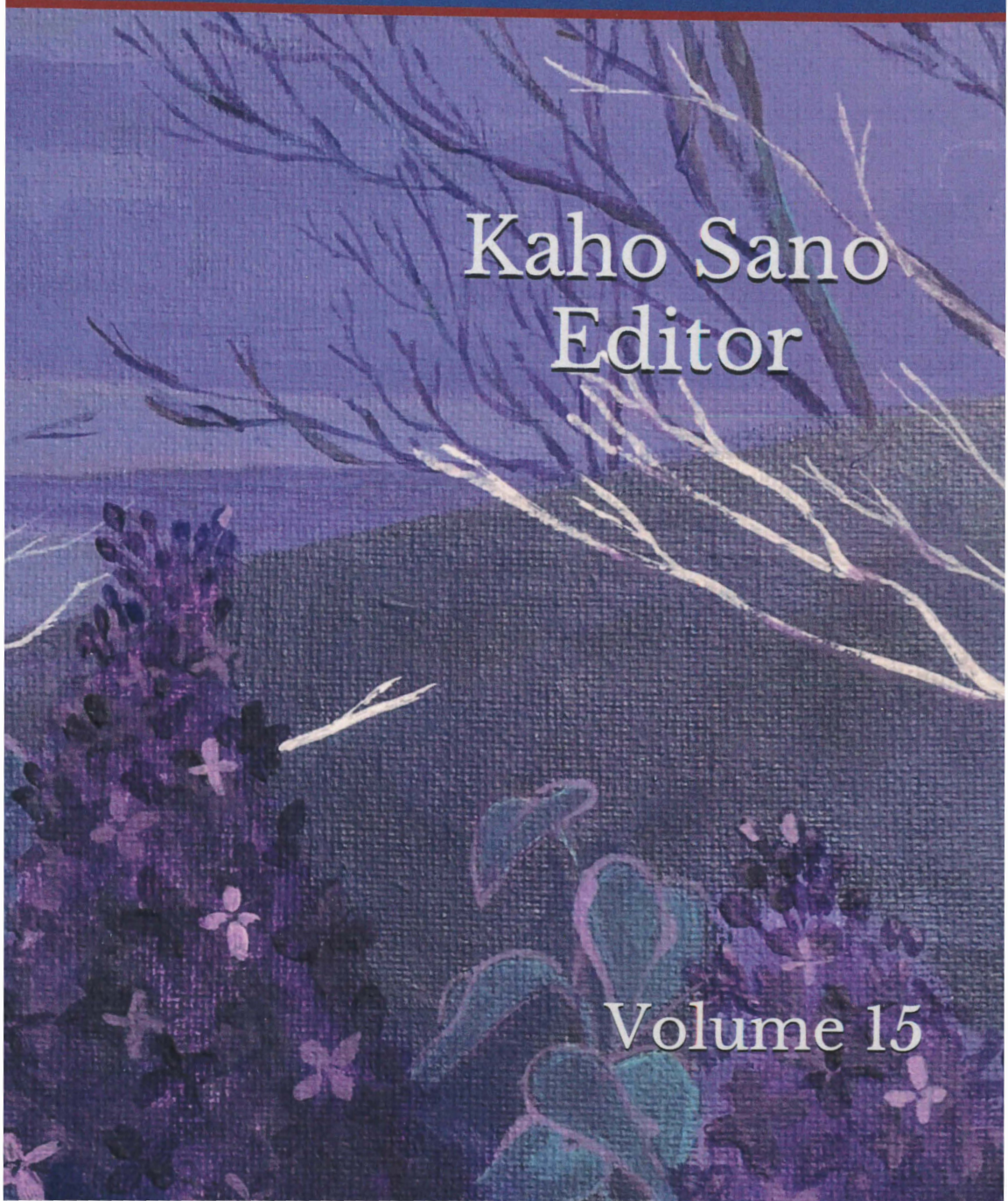


# Gravity Hill

Kaho Sano  
Editor

Volume 15











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Editor

Kaho Sano

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## Editor's Note

Hi. I'm Kaho Sano. Welcome to the 2019 edition of *Gravity Hill*.

First, I want to thank all the students who submitted their works to the journal. This journal would never be wonderful, interesting, and meaningful without their poems, stories, and one-act plays. You can see their feelings at each moment in their lives and I'm sure that there is something you can sympathize with in the journal. When people write stories, most of the time, they put part of themselves into the characters or the story itself. We can know what the writers feel about their life, or parts of it, by reading their works. I think this is a collection of wonderful and meaningful stories. I hope you enjoy these works and get something meaningful from the writers sharing their lives.

Being an international student at St. Andrews University is wonderful, but at the same time tough for me. It is natural for us to have many difficulties in a foreign country. There are many differences between my country, Japan, and Western countries. We speak different languages, eat different foods, and have different values. Our

appearance is also different from Western people, so they notice we are different from them at once. Japan is the country with a homogenous population (I believe). We all speak the same language and are the same race. Therefore, I've never experienced these differences before. I've learned there are many problems around the world that I could not see by living in the island country and the cultural experience is very important to me.

Lastly, I want to say a special thank you to Dr. Ted, my advisor. You are my American father, friend, and a wonderful teacher. I promise you I will be a famous author in the future. I also want to say thank you to my friends (especially my friends who are older than me. You know who you are :). You know I get emotional. However, when I talk to you about it, you give me reasonable solutions. I cannot thank you enough.

*Gravity Hill* is our annual journal. I hope you read and enjoy it. I also hope this journal encourages students here to write more stories and poems because writing is a wonderful tool that allows you to communicate with people all across the world.

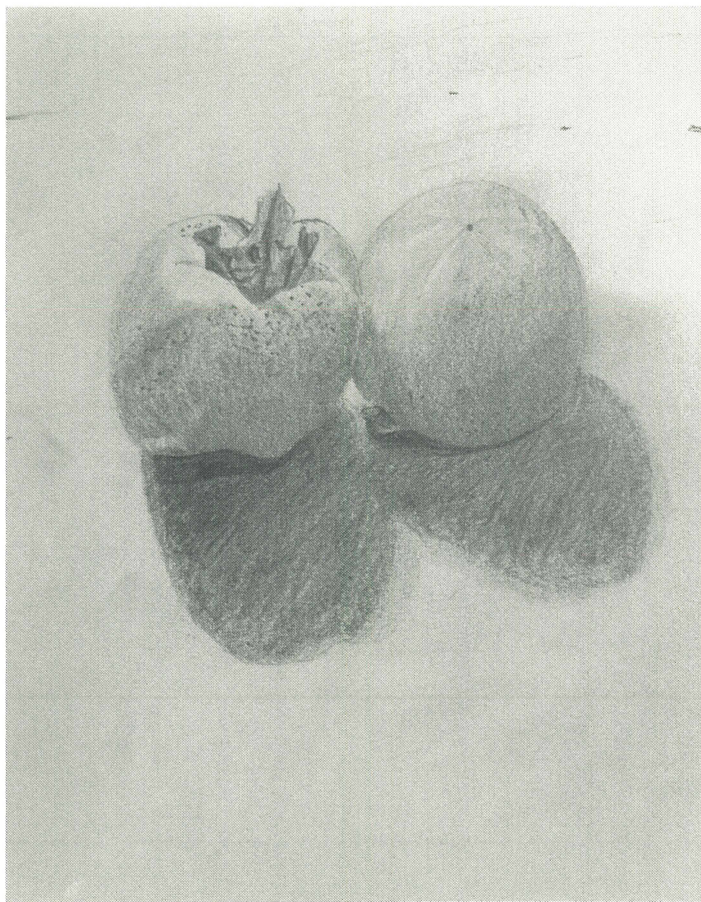
## Table of Contents

<b>Ikumi Toyota</b>	Persimmons	1
<b>Thomas Gilbride</b>	Haiku	2
<b>Hope Botts</b>	The Small Brickhouse on Triangle Drive	3
	It Comes in Waves	5
<b>Allison Wixson</b>	Pour Liquor	7
<b>Kaitlyn Lomax</b>	Apathetic Allegory	9
	May Flowers	11
<b>Jodan Lewis</b>	A Car Accident	12
	British Grass	13
	Growing Older	14
<b>Ikumi Toyota</b>	You	15
<b>Rina Suziki</b>	Love	16
<b>Jordan Lewis</b>	These Streets	17
<b>Kailyn Lomax</b>	The Hunt	25
<b>Sanita Edwards</b>	A Student's Deceit	32
<b>Rina Suziki</b>	The Little Assembly	44
<b>Kaitlyn Lomax</b>	Long Way Down	45
<b>Jordan Lewis</b>	The Pot of Piss	52





## Poetry



Persimmons, by Ikumi Toyota

Thomas Gilbride

Haiku

it's parked at the curb  
a shiny black demon  
the tire is flat

Hope Botts

The Small Brickhouse on Triangle Drive

To most, it appeared  
An outdated ranch style house,  
With sun-bleached shingled and caulked cracks  
Between weather beaten bricks of red, burnt  
brown,  
And jet black turned gray.  
Seventies paneling painted yellow  
By my Grandmother's hand,  
Popcorn ceilings of yesteryears.  
The converted garage appeared to be taken over  
By small horse figurines, pink toy convertibles,  
A white Chevy that hauled a little red horse trailer,  
A large toy dog, a stuffed Garfield,  
And countless painted canvases.  
The sliding doors leading out to the deck out of  
order,  
Held shut by a slender block of wood across their  
base.  
The sink filled to the brim with dishes awaiting  
my Grandmother,  
Built before the dishwasher's climb to fame.

To me, it appeared  
A safe haven,  
With Petunia buds, Snowball Bushes,  
Sunflowers, Blue Verbena, and White  
Magnolias inviting one home.  
The shingles were a resting ground to a long lost  
Yellow frisbee with faded writing, the bricks  
Felt like well-aged friends.  
The walls represented my Grandmother's  
Ability to make anything beautiful,

Painted a soft yellow: her favorite color.  
Popcorn ceilings with wild patterns, working  
better  
Than counting sheep.  
The converted garage was my castle, my boxcar,  
The wild plains of the Old West, with galloping  
Palominos, handcrafted greys, a paint mare  
With a pencil gripper in place of a leg.  
The wooden block was a rustic feature,  
Much wiser than wasting money  
On new doors.

My Grandmother's beautiful, sun-spotted hands,  
Submerged in the murky dishwater,  
Intricate seas of veins along their surface.  
To most, these hands were roughened by life,  
But to me, these hands were more beautifully  
Made than the Northern lights,  
Or the snow topped Himalayas.

## It Comes in Waves

I'm standing here beneath the sun yet all I feel is eternal  
night,  
I'm standing here, longing for the walks along a moonlit  
path,  
Feeling the give in grains of sand  
Underneath our steady stride.  
I'm standing here reminiscing  
Over the long hours spent below the stars,  
Listening to the ocean's melancholy song,  
Every night she calls out to her distant lover,  
Yet every morning all the same  
He silently slips from sight,  
Replaced once more by the cold, unforgiving light.  
I'm standing here, feeling the chilly water  
Rush over my bare feet,  
The sand giving to the sweeping tide.  
I'm standing here,  
Longing to be as free as the mighty heron, her wings  
Flapping powerfully against the earth's constant pull.  
I'm standing here, feeling

## Heavier

Than the thick, mass covered rocks the waves crash against.  
I'm standing here amongst all this beauty  
And yet it is no longer as awe inspiring.  
I'm standing here,  
Feeling an emptiness where your hand used to be.  
I'm standing here, your dog tags resting  
Against the skin of my neck,  
Looking out over the horizon, feeling as lost in love as the  
ocean who always  
Searches for her lover whom she may never reach.

I'm standing here, weighted down  
By the you-shaped hole inside of me.  
Looking at one towel resting in the sand.  
One towel  
where there used to be  
two.



Allison Wixson

Pour Liquor

Pour liquor into an empty cup.  
Kiss my tattered rags.  
Huff and puff,  
Deep into my lungs.  
Seep the poison into my veins.  
Drag your blade-  
One cut  
Two cuts.  
Don't stop now.  
Wrap your arms around my bones,  
Snap them one-by-one.  
Each time your hand meets mine  
The sting never leaves.  
Promise you'll have control,  
Next time.  
Where was that control this time?  
Burn your cigarette,  
Light me on fire.  
It feels like hell inside this home.  
Curse, scream, call me names.  
I am nothing.  
I am worthless.  
I am a waste.  
I've learned to live without.  
Offer affection in the form of remorse,  
It won't help me now.  
You tower above me  
As I crawl on the floor  
Hoping this blow is the last.  
Once again,  
Your hand comes down  
Down onto my back.  
It sears my flesh,

Then everything goes black.

It was the last blow,  
Because now I'm dead  
And you can't hurt me anymore.

Why did I let it get this far?  
You promised this was the last time.

You were right.  
I paid the price.  
Blind, I followed you.  
Now, there is no me.  
Only you  
Pouring liquor into an empty cup.

Kaitlyn Lomax

Apathetic Allegory

It loitered inside my mind;  
That quenchless flame  
Of an untapped life.  
Would the potential shine through?  
Or would I be lost again;  
Another soul adrift in a mediocre world?

I could lose myself in this world;  
The product of a commonplace mind.  
The depression sinks in again;  
Smothering my will with smoke and flame.  
On repeat my thoughts push through;  
Is there even a reason for life?

It is tiresome, this life;  
The hassle of a disconnected world.  
We are nothing more than robots passing  
through;  
Nothing but a blank void in every mind.  
Where has it gone, that once raging flame?  
Will it ever appear again?

I watch it happen again and again;  
The myriads of people who muddle through life.  
It has been a long time since there was a flame  
Inside them that made the world  
An exciting place in each mind.  
They simply sludge through.

But, life is not a quest to simply get through.  
It is not a tiresome record played over and again.  
Life should exhilarate your mind!

Every day should be a life  
Worth living in this vast world.  
We should nurture the flame.

For if we don't nurture our flame,  
We will never make it through.  
We will never see the world  
For the beauty it willingly offers again and again.  
There is so much to behold in this life.  
There is so much that can broaden a mind.

I will set this world on fire with the flame  
of my mind, as I transcend through  
the apathy once again and conquer my life.

## May Flowers

It should have been a lovely day.  
There was plenty to do inside,  
But she had to go out to play.

Showers came as they did in May  
And the puddles had not yet dried.  
It should have been a lovely day.

Headlights out of the foggy gray;  
Out of nowhere it seemed to slide.  
But she had to go out to play.

In the street her body lay.  
There was no time left to chide.  
It should have been a lovely day.

All that was left to do was pray  
After the long ambulance ride.  
But she had to go out to play.

The doctor came to us to say,  
Face of sorrow he could not hide.  
It should have been a lovely day,  
But she had to go out to play.

Jordan Lewis

A Car Accident

The road painted in glass,  
Shakes still from the crash.  
The shimmer brightens as cars pass,  
Drivers unaware, that breath was his last.

Speeding, perhaps;  
Into the barrier he crashed.  
He and the rubber, both burn like ash,  
Carried away, like his driving, fast.



### British Grass

Nothing is as green as British grass.  
This grass—no longer green—was bleached red.  
A war-torn sky, this field the aftermath—  
For every grass leaf lay a man dead.

Grass—mother nature is the creator  
Though this grass field was once drowned in  
blood  
One man lifeless, another the taker;  
He knew not that death had such a touch.

This man, my great grandfather, he *was* great;  
He was a pilot and he was brave  
However, on this grass field he met his fate.  
We never spoke—I speak only with his grave.

This grass took him, no longer does he live;  
Because it was his life that he did give.

## Growing Older

Life is shorter with every minute.  
I am fearful of getting older;  
And memories I can't revisit  
I fear the clock makes me colder.  
I am hopeful aging brings good times!  
My life progresses, all I want is joy  
Happiness comes unexpected sometimes  
My life progresses, yet I am still a boy.  
Death is right under everyone's nose.  
This sad notion is one of my fears.  
Eventually, life will come to a close.  
By death, I hope I lived many years.  
Growing in age makes me want to try;  
So I am grateful saying goodbye.

Ikumi Toyota

You

You unexpectedly appeared in front of me.  
You always smiled cutely.  
You became my best friend.

You liked to see stars.  
You often asked me to see stars together, then  
You talked to me a lot about your dream.

You were like a star.  
You shone a little light into my darkness.  
You knew how much I liked you.  
You knew how much important you are for me.

You left our town suddenly to pursue your dream.  
You will come back, won't you?  
You promised that our relationship is forever.  
You never tell me when you'll be back, but I  
believe  
You.

Fiction



Love by Rina Suziki

Jordan Lewis

These Streets

An unfriendly sea breeze hits my face. The chilling wind gusts by my ears, my eyes and my nose, leaving me to wonder why on Earth I didn't wear a wooly hat. Standing on the pier, gazing out at the ocean, I can't help but think that perhaps leaving this place was a mistake. Freezing cold and rarely sunny, this place, to most people, is not an attractive location to visit but, to me, it's home. The hard, grumpy clouds paint the sky a depressing grey. The raindrops fall with a large, hard-hitting force. The wind strikes like an avalanche—with the same devastating cold, maybe even colder. And the people, well, the people are something else.

Situated on the East coast of Scotland, Arbroath's only claim to fame is its world class fish and chips. No matter the shop, no matter the cook, every establishment in Arbroath knows how to make a mouthwatering plate of fish and chips. Maybe get some mushy peas on the side—perfection. My nose captures a smell—a smell of

deliciousness—that makes my stomach rumble. Like a dog, I follow the scent.

The tasty aroma spreads along the pier, enticing those passing by to indulge in Arbroath's finest cuisine—battered seafood. The heavenly smell that I had followed all the way down the pier led me to Jimbo's Fish n' Chips.

It's been so long since I've been here—I should have known what that smell was. Without hesitation, I enter.

It's cozy in here. Cozy and busy. *Very* busy. I remember back when I was younger it would always be so lively in here. It'd take about ten minutes just to order something.

In line I stand, patiently, eagerly, waiting for my turn to order. The old, chalk-written menu hasn't changed since the last time I was here. I scan through it a few times to try and decide what I want to eat. The process of my decision is a long-winded, deeply complex one.

My menu reading is interrupted by a gentle tapping on my shoulder. An old woman. I recognize her face, but her name escapes me.

"William?" she says to me joyfully.  
"William Campbell? It's Agatha. Agatha Smith."



As soon as she says her name, I remember her. She was my neighbor back when my family and I lived on Main Street.

Living two houses down, Agatha was a very kind, warmhearted lady. She's the type of old person that everyone ought to have on their street—welcoming, gentle, kind. Seeing her makes me happy. Her happiness was always contagious.

“How are ya?” she asks me.

Before I can reply, she says, “I am so sorry to hear about your brother. Such a lovely lad.”

I stutter and choke on some words as they try leave my mouth. Nobody has mentioned him since I've been back.

Eventually, I reply. “Aw, thank you. I ... I'm doing ok. It's good to be back home.”

“Yes, I imagine yer mam is very pleased to see ya during such a hard time. How is she wi' everything?”

The thickness of her accent makes me chuckle. It's been a while since I've heard such a strong Scottish accent.

“Yeah, she's doing all right.”

Not really knowing what else to say—and not wanting to continue to talk about my brother—I ask Agatha, “How have you been?”

“Aw darlin’, I’ve been okay. I’m pottering along. I was just on me way home, but I’m sure I’ll see you whilst yer back. How long are ye back for, sweetie?”

“Just until the funeral and the arrangements are taken care of. So about two weeks.”

“Awright, well, I’m sure I’ll see you again. Aw,” she continues, “it’s so good to see ya Willy. You’ve grown up so much. I remember when ye used to be a little, wee boy.”

She giggles and gets on her way.

After telling Agatha goodbye I order my fish and chips, leave the shop and continue my walk down the pier.

When it starts to get dark, I head home. The depressing, orange glow from the street lights does nothing but cast a haunting light over everything.

As a kid, the glowing of these lights would instantly fill me with fear, not because they light the streets like a horror movie, but because it meant I was late for dinner, and my mum would be waiting—belt in hand—to greet my brother and me.

We were always late. We were always too busy having fun.

Despite the melancholy streets and the ghoulish shadows, I walk home.

My mother, not with a belt, but with a comforting smile, greets me as I walk through the door. We chat for five, maybe ten minutes. We don't chat the same way we used to. We used to be able to chat for hours, talking in depth about any and everything. Deep conversations were very important to my mum.

I suppose it is hard for two people with broken hearts to have a heart-to-heart type conversation. After our underwhelming chat about nothing my mother hands me a box.

"It's a bunch of Mark's old stuff," she says. "I found it in the attic. Maybe you could look through it and see what's important?"

I notice a shirt sleeve poking out the side of the box. The sleeve is green and white striped—a Celtic jersey. He loved Celtic—he was absolutely obsessed with them.

Slowly, and slightly dejectedly, I carry myself and the box up the stairs—I reach my room and slump myself onto the bed.

When I close my eyes to sleep, dancing around in my head are not dreams, but memories. Nights are the worst. His voice echoes throughout my head. The highlights of our adventures play

out like a TV show. Snapshots of my brother and I flash through my weary mind like an uplifting montage.

The constant reappearance of these flashbacks, although sad in the moment, are important to me—they remind me of how much I love and miss him.

For some reason, whether it be the box of his possessions, or seeing Ms. Agatha, the flashbacks are racing around more wildly than usual. The memories are too much. I'm overwhelmed and streams of tears began to flow down my cheeks.

As my tears, sorrowful and relentless, pour out my eyes like a rainy, Arbroath day, a memory starts to play out in my head—a memory that I am often taken back to when I'm feeling especially miserable or lonely. I must've visited this moment about a thousand times.

Mark and I were much younger; I was no older than eleven, Mark was about thirteen or fourteen. It was scorching hot outside and I remember mum had coated Mark and me in about three layers of sun cream—sun cream was not often needed in Arbroath.

Mark and I were playing football on the street with Mark's friends. I hated playing on the

pavement, this pavement especially. It was cracked, and it was jagged so, if you fell, you were more than likely going to hurt yourself. Grazed knees and scuffed trainers were the consequences of playing on *this* street.

On this occasion, one of Mark's friends tried to tackle me. He pushed me over and as soon as my small, fragile, eleven-year-old knee hit that villainous concrete, I started to bleed. The blood poured out relentlessly. Mark was the first to come and see if I was okay—of course he was.

"We've gotta go home and get you patched up. This is a bad cut." Mark said.

I remember I was not happy hearing this news. I didn't want to leave; however, I knew Mark was simply looking out for me.

As we walked home—blood still dripping out my knee—I continued to whine and moan about how awful Arbroath was. "Arbroath is so crappy. All of the roads have potholes. Why can't they put a football pitch in Arbroath? I hate this place."

Mark, calm and patient as always, listened to my rant and then replied, "Arbroath is ours. These streets are as ugly as it gets, but they raised us, and they are like family."

Mark had a special way with words; he, no matter what he said, was always able to calm me. I miss him a lot—the memories are a gentle remedy for my depression. The pain of his death is overwhelming, but the memories of his life, they are infinite. My memories of Mark calm my weeping and softly guide me into a peaceful sleep.

Kaitlyn Lomax

## The Hunt

Fresh snow crunched under heavy boots. I scanned the area for tracks, realizing I only had a short time before the falling snow obscured the trail. Spotting another set of prints beside a fallen oak, I shifted the rifle on my shoulder before setting off again. Trekking through freezing temperatures wasn't the most ideal way to find my quarry; however, I'd been through worse. I tucked an escaped strand of hair back into my balaclava, glad for the protection it provided from the wind. I admired the forest around me as I walked, knowing how easily it could have been decimated. The war had lasted longer than anyone could have ever expected, but it was the lasting effects which were even more disconcerting. You'd think the twenty-first century would have brought about more tolerance rather than more violence, but human nature is unchanging. I thought back to that day in the kitchen, watching the news reports of imminent nuclear attacks. I thought back to the sound of the phone ringing; picking up to hear my

father's voice, "Adaline, I'm leaving London tonight. My jet is already on the tarmac. I love you and I'll ...". The sound of static drowned out the last of his words. It wouldn't be until a day later when I learned that one of the first nuclear bombs had been dropped over England.

The forest was eerily silent as I ventured further up the mountain. What once would have been alive with the sounds of birds and squirrels chattering among one another was like a tomb. Nonetheless, silence had never bothered me. Growing up an only child to a billion-dollar business magnate, I quickly became accustomed to the silent echoing of the halls and the reverence of closed-door meetings—assemblies which I was never privy to. I snapped back to reality as my footing slipped on an icy drift; however, after righting myself, my thoughts drifted again. This time to my mother. Again, I sent up a silent prayer of thanks that she had passed away long before she had to witness the decimation of the war. Though my memories of her were vague, I always recalled her love of nature. Her greatest joy was our estate in Kentucky—spanning two thousand acres and nestled away from the city, it was paradise. My mind trailed to the fields of bluegrass waving in the evening breeze and I



could almost smell.

Snap! The hair on the nape of my neck stood on end as a deep growl to my right alerted me to what I already knew. I drew my pistol right as the wolf launched itself at my throat. I unloaded two rounds into its rotted coat before ducking behind a tree. Even the infected ones travelled in packs and I knew more were sure to be close by. I scanned around me, watchful for any sign of movement. Wind blew the stench of rotting flesh towards me and I turned to see another wolf crouched for the attack. Its coat was mangled in many places and I could see that parts of it had already begun to decompose. Two more shots and it was no more. We thought the radiation would kill the animals, as it had done to so many people. What we didn't expect were the mutations. Docile creatures became killers and predators became the stuff of nightmares. Those who were lucky enough to survive the blasts, often succumbed to the creatures that now roamed the land. Along with a small group of wealthy allies, we realized the importance of stopping these mutant beings before they devoured what was left of our world. It was one of the reasons we chose to develop the Coven, and what led me to my current ice-covered path.

After dispatching the wolves, I proceeded with my treacherous ascent, pausing briefly to check my coordinates and catch my breath. As the tracks became more prominent, I realized my quarry was close. Crouching lower to the ground, I ascended a hill before spotting the mule deer. My heartbeat quickened as I slowly brought my rifle to my side. She was perfect; not a speck of rot or mange on her hide. The mutations hadn't affected her, not yet at least. I fixed my sights and brought her body into the crosshairs. I held my breath as my finger squeezed gently on the trigger. The echoing bang resounded throughout the mountain as she fell to her side.

After enduring the three-hour flight from Colorado, we finally touched down in Kentucky. Coven headquarters had been set up at my parent's old estate; hidden away and highly secured, it made the perfect home base for our operations. Christian's mop of tussled brown hair emerged on the porch as he sprinted down the stairs to meet me.

"How was the hunting trip? Did you get her?" he embraced me in a hug and looked expectantly behind me to the cargo hold of the aircraft.

"I almost froze to death tracking her

down, but yeah it paid off.” I smiled as he rushed around me beaming. So much for holding his attention longer than five minutes. I sighed and shook my head, silently snickering to myself at his enthusiasm. Ascending the stairs, my only thoughts consumed with the necessity of a hot shower.

Later that evening, I took the elevator to the basement, or as I had begun referring to it “Christian’s laboratory.” He had been one semester away from completing veterinary school at Cornell when the bombs were dropped, and he was our resident specialist in all things not mutant. I held my breath and looked at him expectantly, awaiting the news.

“She’s healthy,” he beamed as I sighed with relief. I glanced at the mule deer quietly munching grain. She would stay in this small enclosure until she had fully recovered from the effects of the tranquilizer.

“Once she’s out of quarantine, we can put her in the large enclosure with him and hope they start to ‘like each other,’” he punctuated this last line with a wink and nudged me in the ribs. I rolled my eyes and sent up another prayer. That was one more pair we had, one more species that might be saved. The Covert Operations to Vitalize

Environmental Normality, or Coven, had one main goal, to preserve nature. It had started out slowly, beginning as only a handful of us. When the worst of the war was over, the decimation was unimaginable and the mutations indescribable. Yet, something had to be done. So we began gathering them, the animals that weren't infected, in pairs of two, like a satirical Noah's ark. Eventually, more people in our circles became involved and began gathering them in other parts of the world as well. Now there were Covens all over the world, trying to preserve as many species as possible. I patted Christian on the back before adjourning to my favorite locale. The observatory was the highest point of the house which allowed you to see a vast amount of the estate. However, it was my favorite for another reason. From up here you could see all of them in their fields. From horses to deer to bobcats, they frolicked in their own enclosed worlds, safe from the horrors outside. One day, it would be safe enough to release them again. One day, after the world had begun to heal and the mutants were no more, they would be safe and free. I wrapped my cardigan around me as a breeze ruffled my hair.

“One day.”



Sanita Edwards

A Student's Deceit

As I entered the serenity of my four-walled classroom, I was bombarded by a husky whisper saying "Come here! Come quick! Ms. Frank wants to talk to you." Cluelessly, I followed said voice to the wooden structure that led me to the empty lunchroom. The voice disappeared as I was pulled into the dark and hot trenches of the what seemed to be a secret room. "Shuu-sh and listen," I was told.

"Did anyone see you enter?" asked Ms. Frank.

I shook my head in dismay as I eagerly waited for this conversation to truly begin.

"Girl! There is a sexual misconduct investigation going on right now pertaining to you and one of your students." said Ms. Frank.

I was shocked, this news dismantled me as I did not partake in any sexual activities with any of my students.

"Me and who? What are you talking about?" I asked flabbergasted.

"You and my son, Josh, who is in grade

8,” Ms. Frank replied.

Ms. Frank’s response was quite amusing to me to the point I overlooked the severity of the situation and laughed uncontrollably.

“Girl, why are you laughing? This is a very serious and delicate situation,” said Ms. Frank.

I was drawn back to reality when Ms. Frank said, “You are my friend and I like you very much so that’s why when I heard all this commotion I had to send and called you to alert you on what’s going.” She then proceeded to tell the rest of the story.

“I had just come from the park where the primary school is holding their annual sports day. My son Josh was there. The District Superintendent called both of us and questioned my son about the incident. Josh denied the accusation, but his friend Matt maintained the story that he witnessed both of you engaging in sexual activities on the school compound one evening after school. Now a full investigation is being launched!” Ms. Frank said. “Go back to your classroom and don’t let anyone knows about this conversation.” This was the last thing she said to me. I then snuck out of the lunchroom with the scent of confusion leaving a trail. Shortly after, I

was summoned to the Principal's Office like a student who disobeyed and disregarded school policy and rules.

As I entered the office, I was then told about the wild accusations that were held against me. Once again, I laughed, but this time, I was reprimanded about the severity of the situation and how it could affect me. The principal dismissed me, but not before granting me an invitation in which I had no choice but to accept. "Do not talk to anyone about the situation and remain after school to speak with the District Superintendent and a staff member of your choice."

I was unable to maintain composure. I demanded to speak with Matt, my accuser, in the presence of three other persons.

I asked Matt, "Have you ever seen Josh and me having sex?"

"Yes," Josh replied.

It was as if my jaw bone touched the phalanges in my feet. I rapidly spat questions at him as if we were playing jeopardy. "When? Where? How?"

Matt then began telling his story. "Allan and I was operating a mechanical car one evening right before we entered your classroom. We



greeted and complimented you, after that Josh then proclaimed his love to you and then I exited the room laughing, leaving you two love birds along to get acquainted.”

I lost my concentration as Matt told this story. I began gazing into space and recollected memories of these events specifically because I remember ignoring the compliments and asked Josh to help me clean the room. I regained consciousness in the nick of time to finish hearing the story that Matt was selling.

“I returned to the classroom and the door had was locked. I was then able to peep through the flimsy blinds of classroom windows. This is when I saw you guys in action. I you saw straddling Josh on the table top with your blue knickers hanging on to your ankles,” he said.

I lost touch reality in that very moment. The laughter I once knew turned into pain. “Why are you doing this to me?” I asked.

He just turned and walked away, as if he knew he had slayed the dragon.

*“Why? Please tell me why?”* I shouted.

He responded, “Susan told me to do it.”

It was unimaginable, labeled as slow learners, my grade 8 students, mostly repeaters, were out for revenge! They were smart enough to

convince Matt, an 8th grader from another class, to achieve their goal of getting rid of me.

It was mid-term, the last day of school, and everything was low key, so all students were homeroom based. I turned around and was dumbfounded to see almost every child in my homeroom with cell phones which seemed to all be connected to a device. I closed the door and called the senior master. He searched every child in the room but recovered no phone and that was when the words, “Someone is going down for this” echoed in my room. I had no idea they were capable of such cruel and extreme behavior!

The meeting was scheduled for 3:15 pm—it is now 4:00 pm. I was devastated! The staff member who I was allowed to invite decided it was time to part ways as she had a long drive home and other engagements. I felt abandoned, but in all honesty, I did not want him to be in the meeting with me as he appears to be eccentric and not too fond of me.

I approached another colleague who I had worked with a long time ago at another school. She was a close friend to the accuser’s mother. She accepted my invitation to accompany me to my meeting of death even though she had other endeavors. I was thankful!

The meeting begun, immediately streams gushed down my cheeks. I felt alone, annoyed and embarrassed as they treated me like a convict, like they knew for a fact that I was guilty. It was at this point I no longer cared or feared the consequences, I just wanted to shout, “Fuck it, yes I did it,” as they already thought I was guilty. The questions then began.

“Why would Josh say this is true if it wasn’t?” the District Superintendent said.

I really didn’t have a reasonable answer as I still could not fathom why someone would make up such a story about me which was so far from the truth. I asked to leave the meeting as I felt like the principal was too silent and unexpressive while the District Superintendent wanted my head on a platter! I did not want to give him another moment to enjoy the humiliation he was putting me through. I simply wanted to disappear, go to sleep, and wake up to find out that it was only a dream.

As I got up to leave the meeting, he pleasantly reassured me that Ministry personnel will be visiting the school shortly to conduct a thorough investigation. I felt like just giving him a piece of my mind and forget about job, career, and life on a whole.

Mable, a student in the class later, revealed to me that after the incident with the cell phones the boys went and found Josh and told him to say he had sex with me. Josh laughed and said no he can't do that as it wasn't true. But Matt, his friend, agreed to say he witness the sexual encounter, so they went straight to the Principal's Office and reported the matter. In walked the District Superintendent who was informed of the situation and an investigation was immediately launched without even informing me of the allegation and giving me a chance to respond.

I was incapable of finding the necessary strength to return to work and face my accusers, so I stayed home and cried for many days. I am thankful for the few influential people in the community who placed their jobs on the line, who sought me out and tried to give me a sense of what's going on. They swore me to secrecy and kept me up to date as to how the investigation was proceeding; this was the only thing that kept me sane. It took the persons outside of my school community to assure me that this false accusation would do me no harm and I should trust the system. The school administration and the ministry treated me like a criminal and the loneliness was too much to bear.

Finally, the officials from the Ministry arrived, and there was a great stir and deep interest in the case. I was the only one uninformed about the proceedings. I was later told that if I so desired I could meet with the officials but also advised that I didn't have to. However, as devastated as I was, I agreed to meet with them and against my wishes I had to take the Union representative with me. These concerns were later proven very shortly after the meeting. I became a celebrity making the headlines in the "Punch" front page: "Lady teacher accused of sleeping with 14-year old student." Rumors had it that the Union representative, a teacher of English Language and freelance writer for the popular newspaper, was responsible for selling the article to them. I was devastated as I read the article and for the first time. I was learning most of what the students had to say about me. I approached a lawyer who advised me to leave it alone as there was no mention of my name in the article even though the innuendoes were so strong that I obtained many phone calls from my friends the day the article was released asking if it was me as the references made about the island and teaching position pointed right at me.

Of course, on the day of the meeting I had

to wait until they interviewed all my accusers before I got a chance to present my side which was very late in the evening. During the interview I was asked if I owned a pair of blue boxers and I laughed as I found that so funny. The lawyer was not amused, though, and he strongly reminded me that this is a serious situation which caused me to regain my composure. I surprised myself in the meeting as I managed to not shed a tear and I credit that to my Father in Heaven who I prayed to at the beginning of the meeting and asked Him to strengthen me and He did. To God be the glory. As I spoke of my experience as a probation officer carrying out risk assessment and working with at-risk youths, I realize that I was more competent than I previously thought in teaching and handling these 8th graders, some of whom came from the boot camp and were troubled kids.

The moment of truth came, however, when I was asked if I ever picked up Matt and Josh in my car. Reflecting on the incident I wondered if I could have incriminated myself in the events that I am accused of. The very afternoon after Matt and Josh left my classroom I stopped and offered them a ride as I saw them hitch hiking. This had become my normal routine as I was known as the last teacher to leave the

school campus very late in the evenings and that students attended after school sporting activities took it for granted that they could secure a ride home with me. As I approached the soccer field, I asked them where they were going. Matt jokingly said to my house. I kissed my teeth and stopped at the soccer field and told them to get out my car. Matt then explained that he was going to Fresh Creek, so I continued on my way with them. When I got to the roundabout, again Matt laughed and said that he was going on my street to purchase a pair of shoes from the Lady's House. Feeling convinced I pulled off and later stopped at the Lady's House. It was then that they realized that it was closed, and Matt again jokingly said, "Mrs. James, can we come stay by you until then lady comes home?". I shouted, "Not my house" and pulled away leaving them standing and laughing in the road.

Unknown to me until the time of the accusation, Matt had chatted and laughed all the way into the community where he bragged to his other friends about visiting my house and in his fantasy described all that took place while everyone laughed and had a good time about it. I thought nobody believed Matt's story as it wasn't until I punished the class that the story took life



and people began to hear about it.

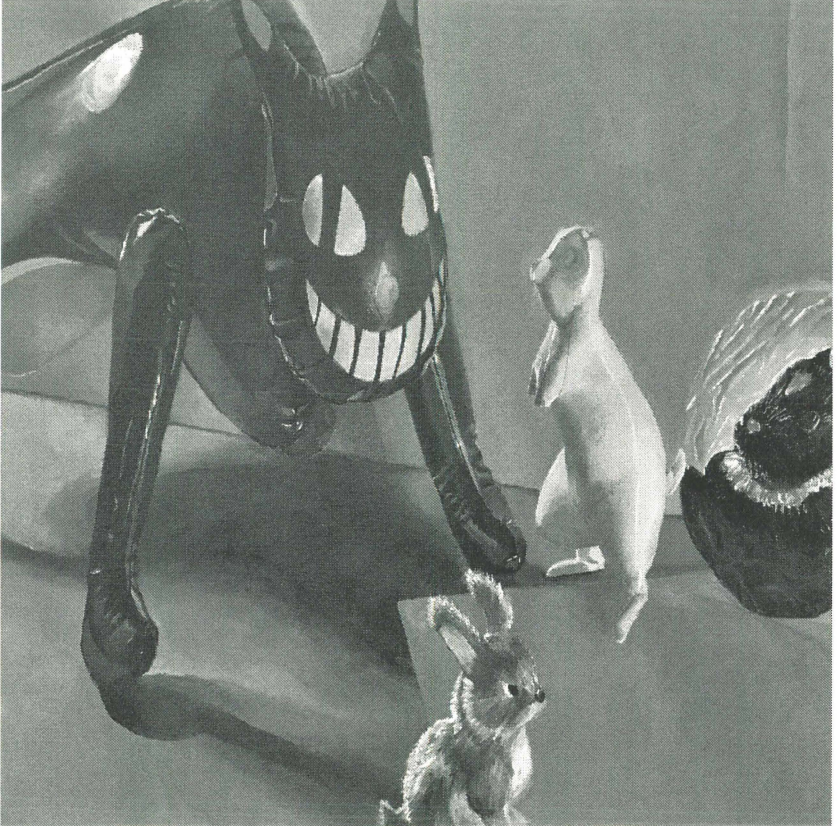
The story was so ridiculous that Josh put forward a different version every time he was interviewed by the professionals handling the case. Amid all the tears and sorrow I am grateful for those moments of laughter that it brought me. I am thankful to God for the strength I gained in those horrible hours so that I could thoughtfully and confidently say to the officials, "Once I'm cleared of all these accusations I want to be transferred off this island." Shockingly the lawyer replied, "Once I'm cleared. Okay, guys, let's pack up and go home. This investigation is over."

While his words brought me some relief, the one-month administrative leave given helped me to somewhat de-stress. I lived with the horror of this false accusation for many years and I was unable to concentrate as it plagued my mind and just would not leave me alone. Returning to work to complete the remainder of the school year was a disaster as it became the norm in my classes for students to ask me, "Ms. James, what's going on, you look so lost and with a blank expression?" Even though I was transferred to another island there is still a cloud of doubt over my head and I am still dazed and I feel like a zombie trying to make sense of the situation which became a



puzzle that I cannot solve. I still cannot think about it now without crying and even though I am cleared of the false accusation the indignation suffered has left me irreparably damaged, despite my innocence.

## Drama



The Little Assembly, by Rina Suziki

Kaitlyn Lomax

Long Way Down

### CHARACTERS

CLAIRE, an attractive woman in her late twenties,  
wearing everyday clothes

JIM, an attractive man in his late twenties,  
wearing very nice business attire, though his hair  
is disheveled (as if he had been frantic)

### SETTING

*(The present. Outside on a cliff, overlooking the mountains. The sun has begun to set. Lights up to reveal Claire reservedly sitting on what looks to be an overhang, her feet dangling off, staring relentlessly at the water below, her face expressionless.)*

JIM

*(Enters stage right, looking very disheveled and frantic.)*

Claire! Claire!

*(He finally spots her and rushes over to the top of the overhang.)*

Claire! I got the call from the hospital and then you weren't there and—Claire, I've been frantic! Can you imagine? Why didn't you answer your phone? I've been worried sick. Seriously, Claire, what if something had happened to—

*(Jim finally notices her reserved demeanor and goes to sit down next to her. As he does his foot kicks loose gravel which falls off the overhang. A resounding splash is heard off stage a moment later. His voice softens and he touches her shoulder.)*

Are you okay?

CLAIRE

*(Finally seeming to realize his presence.)*

Jim? Oh. I'm here.

JIM

*(With a worried lilt.)*

Yes ... I—I know that, baby. I've been calling your phone for over an hour. I couldn't find you. Then I thought to come here. You always liked coming here to think.

*(He pauses and studies her.)*

Why didn't you answer?

CLAIRE

My phone? I don't know. I think I left it somewhere.

JIM

Where did you leave your phone? Claire, the hospital called me from work. Did you go to the hospital?

CLAIRE

Yes.

JIM

And then you ... left?

CLAIRE

Yes.

JIM

And you came ... here?

CLAIRE

Yes.

JIM

*(He abruptly yells at her exasperated.)*

Claire!

CLAIRE

It's a long way down, you know.

JIM

What?

CLAIRE

It's a long way to the bottom.

JIM

Bottom of what?

CLAIRE

Down there.

*(She slowly points to the stage floor,  
where water would be.)*

JIM

*(Hesitantly.)*

Yes. I suppose it is pretty far.

JIM

*(He pauses.)*

Claire what happened? Why did the hospital call me? Are you and the—

CLAIRE

Gone.

JIM

What?

CLAIRE

Gone. I dropped a rock into the water and now it's gone. Everything is gone.

JIM

Baby—

CLAIRE

Don't call me that!

*(She is suddenly hysterical.)*

It's gone, Jim! Can't you understand that?!  
Everything, everything is gone! It's over! It's gone!  
It's lost forever! It's done...

JIM

Claire... It's ok. It's ok

*(He wraps his arms around her and  
pulls her towards himself.)*

Why were you at the hospital?

CLAIRE

It's a long way down.

JIM

Yes, it is.

CLAIRE

Such a long way down.

JIM

Yes, I can see that, honey.

CLAIRE

If you lose something down there, then it's lost  
forever.

JIM

I'm sure it's not lost forever.

CLAIRE

No, it is forever. It's gone forever.

JIM

Claire, is the baby—

CLAIRE

Gone.

JIM

*(Realization finally dawning on him.)*

Claire ...

*(His voice breaks as he tries to remain*

*composed.)*

It's okay. It's going to be okay. We can get through this. It's not your fault. It's not anyone's fault. This just—this just happens sometimes.

CLAIRE

Sometimes things are lost forever.

*(They both sit silently for a moment. Jim picks up a rock and slowly lets it fall from his hand. Another splash is heard offstage after a moment.)*

JIM

It is a long way down.

CLAIRE

Yes.

JIM

Such a long way down.

CLAIRE

Yes.

JIM

If you lose something down there, then it really is lost forever.

CLAIRE

Forever...

JIM

Forever...

CLAIRE



*(They sit again for another moment in silence. Both stare expressionlessly at the water.)*

Are we lost?

JIM

Yes. I suppose.

CLAIRE

Lost forever.

JIM

*(He is silent for a moment as he studies her expression for the first time.)* No, not forever.

CLAIRE

How do you know?

JIM

Forever is a long way away.

*(Claire leans her head on Jim and they both continue to look at the water, but their expressions aren't as emotionless as before. The lights slowly dim to black.)*

END

Jordan Lewis

The Pot of Piss

CHARACTERS

BOBBY, a Scottish kid, late teens-early 20s.

JIMMY, Bobby's best mate, late teens-early 20s.

GRANDPA, Bobby's grandfather, late 80s early 90s.

SETTING

*(The present. 20-30 minutes before Jimmy's date. Grandpa's room in an old folks' home. A chair and a chest of drawers, stage right, with pictures frames, hair-brushes, lose coinage and deodorant on it. The bed is center stage. Under the bed, which is center stage, are the two pots—one with "pee" in it, the other empty. Bobby and Jimmy are on stage. Bobby is wearing jeans and a t-shirt. Jimmy is wearing slightly nicer jeans and a slightly nicer t-shirt. Bobby and Jimmy break a pencil in half.)*

BOBBY

C'mon mate, you drew the short half!

JIMMY

I'm not picking up a pot of your grandad's piss!

BOBBY

Aw Jesus, Jimmy.

BOBBY

*(Bobby pauses and looks at the pot  
underneath the bed.)*

Awright then, I'll do it. You owe me one, ya  
coward.

JIMMY

Okay, mate. Just try and hurry up, this place  
freaks me out. I feel like the people here are gonna  
try to do weird stuff to me.

BOBBY

Shut it, ya princess. It's an old folks' home, not an  
insane asylum.

*(There is an empty pot next to the full one.  
Jimmy is sitting on a chair. Bobby picks  
up the empty pot and walks over to  
Jimmy. Jimmy doesn't know Bobby is  
carrying an empty pot. Bobby pretends to  
trip and spill the pot on Jimmy—the pot is  
empty.)*

JIMMY

*(Frightened but then begins to laugh)*

Ah! Oh, you bastard! That scared the life out of me!

BOBBY

Ha! Gotcha, ya little cissy! Imagine if there was stuff in there!

JIMMY

I'd kill ya.

BOBBY

You'd be covered in a 90-year-old's stale pee. Probably smell better than you do now though.

JIMMY

Arsehole.

JIMMY

*(After being frightened, Jimmy readjusts himself in his seat.)*

Why has yer grandad got two pots to piss in? Is one not enough?

BOBBY

*(Bobby is walking back to the bed with the empty pot.)*

Probably just in case he runs outta space in the other pan. I dunno, mate, he's old and needs to pee a lot, I guess.

JIMMY

Aye, you're probably right there, mate. Whatever, just hurry up with that pot.

BOBBY

*(Bobby stands next to the bed, staring at the pot of urine.)*

Oh jeez, Jim, I dunno if I wanna touch that, it reeks!

JIMMY

It's pee, mate, it isn't gonna smell like David Beckham aftershave.

BOBBY

Yeah, but it smells like a bloody sewer! What is my grandad drinking? Tear gas?

JIMMY

Mate, shut yer yabbering and just get the pot and empty it. I got stuff to do.

BOBBY

Why don't you come do it then, ya balloon!

JIMMY

It's your grandad's pee!

BOBBY

You drew the short half of the pencil though, I'm doing *you* the favor. Either come do it yerself or shut yer whining! I'm sick of you always getting me to do stuff for ya!

JIMMY

Awright, mate, relax. Sorry I said anything. I just ... I have a thing after this.

BOBBY

What *thing*? We were supposed tae go play footy with the lads!

JIMMY

It's nothing mate.

BOBBY

Nah, tell me pal, (*mockingly*) go on, what's Jim's *big plans* fer today?

JIMMY

*(Jimmy gets timid and quiet. Bobby is intrigued by Jimmy's plans. Bobby, although intrigued, is wincing at the sight and smell of the pee.)*

It's just ... well ... I ... I have a date tonight with a girl.

BOBBY

Oh, so since you have a date, I have to carry the old rotten pot of toxic piss? Seems fair.

JIMMY

Yeah, I'm headed right over to pick her up after we're done in this looney-bin.

BOBBY

First of all, it's not a looney-bin, it's an old folks' home. Second, who ya goin' on a date with?

JIMMY

*(Jimmy pauses nervously. Then a small smirk appears on his face.)*

Heather McCain.

BOBBY

You're joking! There is no way you're goin' on a date with Heather! She's the best-looking girl in our class!

JIMMY

Well, she's nice ya, know. Funny and stuff. We get along real good!

BOBBY

Jim, mate, she is a massive upgrade on that hag you used to date! Congrats, Jimmy boy.

JIMMY

Thanks pal, I'm really excited.

BOBBY

Awright, well lemme get rid of this pissy pan and we'll get you to Heather in no time!

BOBBY

*(Bobby lies on the floor and stretches underneath the bed to grab the pot. As he does so, some of the urine in the pot spills out on his hand.)*

Oh good God! I spilt some on me! That is disgusting. I think I'm gonna be sick.

JIMMY

Aw jeez, Bob, go wash yer hands! That is vile, mate.

*(Bobby runs off stage to go wash his hands. Jimmy stands up and walks over*

*to the bed to look at the pot and the  
puddle of pee.)*

That truly is the most disgusting thing I've ever  
seen. It's all cloudy.

*(Shouting to Bobby)*

Are you sure that's even pee? Looks like nuclear  
waste. Why can't your grandpa use the bathroom  
like every other normal human?

BOBBY

*(Off-stage)*

I dunno, mate, it's some compulsion. Apparently,  
he doesn't like to ever leave his room, except for  
when he goes to bingo.

JIMMY

Where is he now?

BOBBY

Bingo.

*(Jimmy stands up. Bobby walks back on  
stage. Jimmy heads back over to his  
chair.)*

BOBBY

Where do ya think you're going?

JIMMY

My seat ...

BOBBY

Nah pal, you can carry this pot of poison. I'm not  
touching that thing again.



JIMMY

*(Pleading with Bobby)*

But Bobby, my date! You know how hard it is for me to talk to girls, let alone impress them! Please mate, for yer pal?

BOBBY

*(Bobby is stood next to the bed thinking.*

*He sniffs the hand that he spilt pee on.)*

Jesus, mate, I washed my hands three times just then and the stench of his wizz is all I can smell. It's like engrained into my skin!

JIMMY

Please, mate. I need ya to do this for me!

BOBBY

Fine! I'll carry it. But you owe me one, ya little sook.

BOBBY

*(Bobby lies back on the ground, stretching*

*his arm to grab the pot. Pee spills out*

*again.)*

Aw, God it's spilling all over me!

JIMMY

Just keep going through it! It's only wee, it can't hurt ya!

BOBBY

I dunno about that, this is some toxic piss.

*(Bobby stands up. The pot is out from underneath the bed. Bobby looks over at Jimmy who is seated in the chair.)*

You better marry this girl, mate.

*(Bobby lifts the pot. Some pee spills out both sides.)*

Oh god! It's touching me, oh my god!

*(Bobby carries the pot and begins to walk fast.)*

JIMMY

*(Laughing)*

Bobby, you look like a right idiot! Stop walking so fast, that's why it's spilling! Relax.

BOBBY

Feel free to come carry it, lover boy. I need to get rid of this, oh my gawd!

*(As Bobby walks past Jimmy, he trips over, spilling the pee all over Jimmy.)*

JIMMY

*(In shock, terror and disgust)*

Ah! Aw gawd! Oh, Christ almighty, no! No! Not today! No!

BOBBY

Aw jeez, mate, I'm sorry. I tripped over, it was an accident!

JIMMY

It freakin' stinks! Why does it smell so bloody awful! Aw God, I'm gonna be sick!

*(Jimmy stands up. He is soaking wet, covered in pee.)*

BOBBY

*(Starting to laugh but holding it in)*

Look, mate, it isn't too bad! It could be worse!

JIMMY

How? How on earth could it be any worse?

BOBBY

Well, it coulda been his poo pot.

JIMMY

*(Jimmy starts to shake the wetness off.)*

Oh god, Heather—what am I gonna do? I told her I was gonna pick her up in twenty minutes from now! Aw jeez.

BOBBY

Just go home and get changed?

JIMMY

*(Jimmy stops shaking the pee off. Instead, he starts to undress.)*

I can't, I live an hour away, ya clumsy, useless prat!

BOBBY

Mate, I understand you're under a lot of stress right now but getting undressed and showing

these old folks your pasty white nipples is not the solution.

JIMMY

Shut up ya, twit. Check your grandad's drawers, does he have any clothes I can borrow?

BOBBY

*(Bobby walks over to the chest of drawers. He opens them to look for clothes.)*

No, not really. Just got a bunch of old shirts, old blazers and old socks. Just old stuff, man.

JIMMY

Does it smell like piss?

BOBBY

*(Bobby sniffs the clothes in the drawer.)*

No. Smells like a dusty museum.

JIMMY

I prefer dust-smelling to pee-smelling, gimme it.

*(Bobby throws a shirt and some pants over to Jimmy. Jimmy puts the clothes on.)*

JIMMY

Jeez, they're a bit baggy on me.

BOBBY

Yeah, you look like a hobo.

JIMMY: They're itchy too.

*(Itches himself profusely)*

Nah I can't wear these.

*(Jimmy looks around the room.)*

JIMMY

Gimmie your clothes.

BOBBY

Huh?

JIMMY

Quick mate, gimmie your clothes.

BOBBY

No chance, pal.

JIMMY

Please, mate, I can't wear this carpet suit and I definitely can't wear my pissy clothes.

BOBBY

What am I supposed to wear?

JIMMY

Um ... you can wear your grandpa's clothes!

BOBBY

I dunno mate. That's a little weird.

JIMMY

Weirder than me wearing them to a date?

BOBBY

Good point, but still mate ... I dunno.

JIMMY

Look, I need this from ya, pal. I promise I'll pay ya back.

BOBBY

*(Bobby looks around him. He is clearly thinking.)*

Fine, but you seriously owe me big time!

*(Bobby takes off his shirt and then his pants. He hands them to Jimmy. Jimmy takes off Grandpa's clothes and hands them to Bobby. Both characters are standing on stage in their underwear. Grandpa enters stage right.)*

BOBBY

Um ... hey, grandpa. This is weird, but it can be explained.

GRANDPA

*(There is a moment of silence, but it is clear that grandpa is shocked. His shock then turns to anger.)*

Why are you idiots naked in my room? Get outta here ya freakin, morons! What are ya doin parading around like savages in here? Absolute delinquents.

*(There is silence. Jimmy is evidently mad about Grandpa's comments.)*

JIMMY

You're not one to talk about idiots or morons—who the hell keeps a pot of cloudy, rancid piss under their bed? We don't live in the medieval

times anymore, old man, we have plumbing! Use the bloody bathroom.

JIMMY

*(Jimmy looks at Bobby.)*

Can I get your clothes, please?

*(Bobby hands Jimmy the remainder of his clothes.)*

JIMMY

Cheers, I'll see ya later.

*(Jimmy runs off stage right.)*

GRANDPA

You need to get some new friends, Robert.

BOBBY

Yeah, and you need to learn to use the toilet.

End.







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Thomas Gilbride

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